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PAGE 01 QUITO 01452 01 OF 03 221311Z
ACTION INR-00

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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	WHA-00
	DS-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	ACE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TEST-00
	USIE-00	IIP-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W
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O 221303Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1454
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
DIRONDCP WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 QUITO 001452

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, WHA, WHA/AND, WHA/PDA
DIRONDCP FOR PA
EMBASSIES FOR PAO/IO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL, OPRC, KIRC, KPAO, EC
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: VENEZUELAN CRISIS: QUITO

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PAGE 02 QUITO 01452 01 OF 03 221311Z
1. SUMMARY: VENEZUELA CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE OP-
ED PAGES IN ECUADOR, BUT MOST COLUMNISTS HAVE QUICKLY
BACKED AWAY FROM DWELLING ON THE THEORY THAT THE U.S.
CONSPIRED TO OVERTHROW THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT AND HAVE
GONE BACK TO RE-EXAMINE "LESSONS LEARNED" ABOUT
DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA. END SUMMARY.

2. "THE FOOLISH COUP," AN OPINION COLUMN (04/19) BY
GONZALO RUIZ ALVAREZ IN QUITO'S LEADING CENTRIST "EL
COMERCIO" (CIRC. 70,000)

QUOTE: "HUGO CHAVEZ WAS THE VICTIM OF HIS OWN
INVENTION. . . BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GOVERNING IS
SOMETHING MORE THAN WINNING ELECTIONS AND THAT HIS
PARTICULAR STYLE . . . HAVE EXASPERATED VENEZUELAN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
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POLITICAL LIFE, TURNING HIS TENURE INTO A LONG AND AGITATED TUG-OF-WAR WITH THE TRADITIONAL POWER GROUPS. . .

"IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE U.S. DID NOT LIKE CHAVEZ' RELATIONSHIP WITH FIDEL. THE CONTACTS THE VENEZUELAN REGIME HAD WITH THE COLOMBIAN FARC GUERRILLAS ALSO CAUSED SUSPICION AND UNEASY FEELINGS

.
"LAST WEEK'S FOOLISH COUP AND COARSE COUP D'ETAT DISREGARDED THE CONSTITUTION AND ATTEMPTED TO SUPPRESS THE ASSEMBLY. THIS ATTEMPT REVEALED THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF THE POWER FROM THE NORTH THE COUNTRY REMAINS FRAGMENTED. VENEZUELA'S FUTURE IS A WHOLE NEW CHALLENGE FOR PRESIDENT CHAVEZ AND FOR
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PAGE 03 QUITO 01452 01 OF 03 221311Z
THE POLITICAL STABILITY OF THE REGION IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES."

3. "WEAK DEMOCRACIES," AN OPINION COLUMN (04/19) BY CLAUDIO MENA VILLAMAR IN QUITO'S CENTER-LEFT (INFLUENTIAL) "HOY" (CIRC. 25,000)

QUOTE: "ALMOST EVERY DEMOCRACY IN OUR LATIN AMERICAN REGION IS WEAK AND AT ANY TIME MAY PROVOKE SAD SURPRISES AS THE ONE WE HAD RECENTLY OVER THE EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN VENEZUELA.

"THE COUP D'ETAT . . . IN VENEZUELA WAS THE MIRROR IN WHICH OUR COUNTRIES, WHICH HAVE BECOME USED TO GATHERING AROUND PRESIDENTIAL ELITES IN ORDER TO ALLEGEDLY MAKE OUR PEOPLES HAPPY, CAN LOOK AT THEMSELVES. CHAVEZ' RETURN MUST BE WELCOMED BY THOSE WHO SEEK THE PERMANENCE OF DEMOCRACY, BUT IT MAY SERVE ALSO AS A STRONG WARNING FOR THE FORMER PARATROOPER SO HE WILL NOT ACT AS CLUMSILY AS HE DID BEFORE. HOPEFULLY HE WILL UNDERSTAND THAT DEMOCRACY IS A PERMANENT CHALLENGE FOR PERFECTION WHICH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH ALL FORMS OF AUTOCRACY AND CONDUCT THAT DOES NOT RESPECT THE RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES CONSECRATED IN THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION."

4. "FAILED COUP," AN OPINION COLUMN (04/19) BY JULIO PRADO VALLEJO (FORMER MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS) IN GUAYAQUIL'S CENTRIST "EXPRESO" (CIRC. 28,000)

QUOTE: "FORTUNATELY, THE COUP D'ETAT IN VENEZUELA

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PAGE 04 QUITO 01452 01 OF 03 221311Z
FAILED. . . . MR. CARMONA WAS, REGRETTABLY, WRONG,
BECAUSE IT IS NOT CORRECT IN A DEMOCRACY TO DISSOLVE
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND HINDER THE NORMAL
OPERATION OF THE JUDICIAL POWER.

". . . WE MUST CONFESS THAT TWO FACTS STAND OUT
CLEARLY AND EVIDENTLY FROM WHAT OCCURRED:

"MR. CHAVEZ HAS COMMITTED A SERIES OF INDISCRETIONS
AND INCLINED TOWARD AUTHORITARIAN RULE THROUGHOUT HIS
TENURE, WHICH HAS GENERATED A REACTION AGAINST HIS
GOVERNMENT AND LED TO A SUBSTANTIAL LOSS OF POLITICAL
SUPPORT. . . .

"IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT THE INTER AMERICAN SYSTEM DID
NOT ACT WITH DUE TIMELINESS.

"WE HOPE THAT MR. CHAVEZ MENDES HIS WAYS AS WELL IN
THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD, THAT HE REJECTS EVERY
CONTACT AIMED AT PROTECTING THE FARC THAT ENTERED
VENEZUELA, AND THAT HE STOPS SHOWING ANIMOSITY

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01452 02 OF 03 221311Z
ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	WHA-00
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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1455
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 QUITO 001452

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, WHA, WHA/AND, WHA/PDA
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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 QUITO 01452 02 OF 03 221311Z
TOWARDS THE U.S. WITH HIS STATEMENTS ABOUT TERRORISM.
.."

5. "GHOSTS AND REALITIES," AN OPINION COLUMN (04/19)
BY ORLANDO ALCIVAR IN GUAYAQUIL'S (AND ECUADOR'S)
LEADING CENTER-RIGHT "EL UNIVERSO" (CIRC. 140,000)

QUOTE: "IN OUR LATIN AMERICA FROM TIME TO TIME THERE
ARE COUPS, SOME SUCCESSFUL, OTHERS NOT, THAT IN ANY
EVENT BRING ALONG A LONG LIST OF DAMAGES FOR THE
COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

"POVERTY IS THE ORIGIN OF MANY OF OUR POLITICAL
ILLNESSES, BECAUSE THERE ARE ALWAYS UNSATISFIED
PEOPLE THAT WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVING STANDARDS
AND BECOME EASY PREY FOR THE SNAKE CHARMERS THAT
APPEAR IN PUBLIC PLACES REQUESTING VOTES IN EXCHANGE
OF ALL TYPES OF OFFERINGS FOR THOSE DESPERATE PEOPLE.
.. .

". . . AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO
ACCEPT SHAMELESSLY THE BREAKING OF THE CONSTITUTION,
EVEN IF THE LEADER IS GETTING LOW GRADES IN HIS
HOMEWORK."

6. "CHAVEZ, CNN AND THE PALACE INSURRECTION," AN
OPINION COLUMN (04/17) BY MARCO ROBLES IN CUENCA'S
CENTER-RIGHT "EL TIEMPO" (CIRC. 7,000)

QUOTE: ". . . THE PERFORMANCE OF THE POWERFUL
TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK CNN IN TRANSMITTING THE EVENTS
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PAGE 03 QUITO 01452 02 OF 03 221311Z
(FROM VENEZUELA), WAS NOT IDEAL. . . .

". . . CNN, RESEMBLING A MADAM IN A PALACE
INSURRECTION, DUBBED THE SWIFT AND ILLEGITIMATE
REGIME OF PEDRO CARMONA A 'TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT!'

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IN THIS WAY THE COUP D'ETAT WAS CONVENIENTLY
SWEETENED BY THAT TRANSNATIONAL OF COMMUNICATIONS.

"OF COURSE, U.S. DIPLOMACY WAS ALL THE TIME WELL
INFORMED OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE COUP: EVERY
STEP TAKEN WAS TIMELY, INFORMED BY THE COUP PLOTTERS,
ESPECIALLY BY THE DISSIDENT OFFICERS.

"HOWEVER, U.S. DIPLOMACY PLAYED TWO CARDS: ON ONE
SIDE THE MEETING WITH THE OAS IN SUPPORT OF THE
APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 25. . . AND AT THE SAME TIME.
. . DURING THE MEETING OF SAID ORGANIZATION, IT
INVOKED ARTICLE 350 OF THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION
THAT STATED THAT THE PEOPLE OF THAT NATION WILL
DISOWN ANY REGIME THAT ACTS AGAINST DEMOCRATIC
PRINCIPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS. WHAT THAT MEANS THAT IN
THE END IS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DID NOT HIDE
ITS SYMPATHY TOWARDS THE COUP.

"U.S. DIPLOMACY WAS NOT TRANSPARENT; CNN, ON THE
OTHER HAND, APPEARED IN A BAD LIGHT BECAUSE IT
MUFFLED AND DISSIMULATED ITS INTENTIONS WITH
MELLIFLUOUS AND DECEPTIVE LANGUAGE. CHAVEZ, WHO IS
NOT A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE POLITICAL LIST OF
SAINTS, HAD A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE AND HAS TO
MOVE VERY CAREFULLY FROM NOW ON."

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PAGE 04 QUITO 01452 02 OF 03 221311Z

7. "THE VENEZUELAN LESSON," AN OPINION COLUMN
(04/18) BY CLEMENTE HARO IN GUAYAQUIL'S CENTRIST
"EXPRESO" (CIRC. 28,000)

QUOTE: "THE VENEZUELAN LESSON . . . SHOWS THAT
PEOPLE HAVE EVOLVED TOWARDS A CLEARER CONCEPTION AND
PERCEPTION OF THE POLITICAL REALITIES THAT PREVENT
THEM FROM BEING THE PREY OF MANIPULATION AND THE
OBSCURE MANEUVERS OF THOSE LED BY THEIR DARK DESIRES.

"WHEN LEGITIMATE PATHS ARE CLOSED FOR THE PEOPLE, THE
DOORS OF VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM GET OPENED FOR
DICTATORSHIPS, ANARCHY AND IRREGULAR WARS."

8. "VENEZUELA'S FUTURE," AN EDITORIAL (04/18) IN
GUAYAQUIL'S CONSERVATIVE "EL TELEGRAFO" (CIRC. 8,000)

QUOTE: "NOT A LEADER, BUT RATHER DEMOCRACY WON THIS
TIME. VENEZUELA IS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY BY HISTORY.
CHAVEZ, WITH THIS NEW OPPORTUNITY, HAS TO CHANGE HIS

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01452 03 OF 03 221312Z
ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	WHA-00
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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1456
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 QUITO 01452 03 OF 03 221312Z
ATTITUDE AND STYLE."

9. "DELICACIES WITH CHAVEZ," AN OPINION COLUMN
(04/19) BY MARENA BRIONES VELASTEGUI (FORMER IV) IN
QUITO'S CENTER-LEFT (INFLUENTIAL) "HOY" (CIRC.
25,000)

QUOTE: "CHAVEZ IS A DELICACY . . . BECAUSE HE STIRS
CRITICISM AND HIS BEHAVIOR PROVOKES CERTAIN ACTIONS.
A DELICACY FOR THOSE . . . WHO SEE IN POPULISM A SORT
OF MORTAL ENEMY OF SHAM DEMOCRACY. SO-CALLED
POPULISM IS NOT A SCOURGE WORTH ATTACKING.

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WHAT IT IS, THOUGH, IS THE LEGITIMATE DISSATISFACTION PEOPLE HAVE IN THE FACE OF THE OPULENCE AND ABUSIVE PRIVILEGES THAT RIDICULE THEIR MISERY AND EXCLUSION. WHILE THESE REMAIN THE SAME AND WHILE WE CONTINUE FAILING TO SAY IT CLEARLY, COMBATING THEM WITH STRONG ACTIONS AND ARGUMENTS, EVERY TYPE OF POPULISM WILL BE LEGITIMATE, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT."

10. ARTICLES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS:

- "IS LATIN AMERICA VIABLE?" AN OPINION COLUMN BY MACARIO SCHETTINO IN MEXICO'S "EL UNIVERSAL" REPRINTED BY QUITO'S LEADING CENTRIST "EL COMERCIO" ON 04/19/02

- "LOSING LATIN AMERICA," AN OPINION COLUMN BY PAUL KRUGMAN IN "THE NEW YORK TIMES," REPRINTED BY GUAYAQUIL'S (AND ECUADOR'S) LEADING CENTER-RIGHT "EL UNIVERSO" ON 04/19.

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PAGE 03 QUITO 01452 03 OF 03 221312Z

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